(b) whether it is a fact that all the new appointees are very old, one of them being nearly 90 years' old; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons for appointing such old persons?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) Reconstitution of the membership of any council institution after the tenure of the members is over, is a normal phenomenon. The tenure of the nominated members of the Indian Council of Historical Research was over in November, 1997.

(b) and (c) No new appointee is 90 year old, Eminence is the decisive factor in nominating historians to CHR.

Use of Quinacrine Drug in India

*547. SHRI K.R. MALKANI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether two Americans, Stephen Dr. Mumford and Dr. Kessel have developed Quinacrine, a cheap sterilisation drug with carcinogenic side-effects are reported in the Financial Express, dated 19th June, 1998;

(b) whether 26,000 women have already been sterilised in India by insertion of Quinacrine packets direct with fallopian tube;

(c) how this is happening in the country as the drug which was not used in the West and manufactured only in Switzerland, managed to enter India; and

(d) what action Government have taken against doctors/hospitals engaged in using Quinacrine?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DALIT EZHILMALIA): (a) According to the International Journal of Gynaecology and Obsterics 1989, Dr. Jaime Zipper of Santiago, Chile is reported to have developed Quinacrine drug for sterilisation. Dr. Kessel & Dr. Stephen Mumford of the International Federation of Family Health (IFFH) were reported to be distributing the drug to various countries. There is no conclusive scientific evidence of this drug causing carcinogenic side effects.

(b) and (c) There has been no official import of the drug and as such it is not possible to indicate the number of women who have been sterlised by Quinacrine pellets in India. Investigations have revealed that some practitioners and N.G.O.s in India and managed to get the drug from Dr. Kessel and others as gift items and with the consent of some women volunteers inserted Quinacrine for sterlisation purpose.

(d) There is no provision under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and Rules thereunder which prohibits the import of a drug, against personal/test licence or as a gift item from a doctor to his patients, after obtainng the patient's consent, subject to prescribed conditions.

However, in view of the question on safety of the drug raised by Indian Council of Medical Research, the Government in consultation with the Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB) and Ministry of Law, has taken steps to ban the import of this drug in any dosage form into the country under Section 10-A and also ban its manufacture distribution and sale under Section 26-A, for the purpose of female sterilization or constraception. Necessary notification to give effect to the same are in the final stages of processing in consultation with the Ministry of Law (Official Language Wing).

Post-Budget Price Rise of Essnetial Commodities

*548. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report "Sizzling

onions, deep-fried opinions", regarding the price rise in the news magazine "Outlook", dated 6th July, 1998;

(b) if so, Government's reaction to the post-budget price rise in onions, potatoes, brinjals, cooking oil, rajmah, lemons etc. as tabulated in the above report;

(c) whether Government are monitoring the price of the above items;

(d) if so, the pre-budget and post-budget price of the above items as monitored; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SURJIT SINGH BARNALA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Variations in prices of some of the essential commodities including vegetables can be attributed to decline in production during 1997-98 on account of adverse climatic conditions, ongoing lean supply season, gap in supply and demand, increase in input costs, transportation bottlenecks, lower imports of items like edible oils, pulse etc.

(c) The Department of Consumer Affairs monitors regularly the retail prices of 12 very essential commodities, viz., rice, wheat, gram dal, arhar, sugar, groundnut oil, mustard oil, Vanaspati, tea, potato, onion and salt on a daily basis is respect of 18 State capitals. The wholesale prices for the above items and gur are also monitored on weekly basis in respect of 37 selected centres, including major producing centres spread all over the counry.

(d) The pre-budget and post-budget prices of selected items are given in the Statement (*See* below).

(e) Does not arise in view of reply to (d) above.

Statement

Retail prices of selected essential commodities at selected centres

(Rs. per kg.)

Pre-Badget (29.5.98)

Item	Delhi	Mumbai	Calcutta	Chennai	Trivandrum	Guwahati
Onion	6.00	5.50	8.00	5.00	7.00	7.00
Potato	8.00	9.50	8.00	10.00	10.00	8.00
Groundnut oil	51.00	48.00	50.00	43.00	47.00	67.00
Mustard oil	44.00	50.00	46.00	47.00	55.00	38.00
Vanaspati	51.00	48.60	45.00	50.00	50.00	53.00
Tea (loose)	130.00	140.00	100.00	157.50*	120.00	110.00
	Post Budget (20.7.98)					
Onion	13.00	11.50	16.00	11.00	14.00	15.00
Potato	12.00	12.50	14.50	11.00	14.00	11.00
Groundnut oil	57.00	54.00	55.00	51.00	47.00	67.00
Mustard oil	54.00	60.00	52.00	48.00	N.R.	47.00
Vanaspati	56.00	52.75	54.00	50.00	50.00	55.00
Tea (loose)	130.00	140.00	110.00	167.50*	120.00	100.00

Source: State Food & Civil Supplies Departments
N.R.—Not Reported. * Packed (3Rose brand)